



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**
New York District

**PUBLIC NOTICE
SAW MILL RIVER BASIN, NY
ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION STUDY
FEASIBILITY PHASE STUDY**

This notice announces the initiation of a Federal-Westchester County funded feasibility level study for the comprehensive examination of the environmental restoration needs for the Saw Mill River Basin, New York. The study is authorized under the Flood Control Act of 1965 and Section 210 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1996.

In response to local and State requests, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New York District (Corps) performed a Reconnaissance Study and issued a report in September 1999 that demonstrated a Federal interest and the need for a more detailed Feasibility Study of the Saw Mill River Basin. The purpose of the feasibility study is to develop and evaluate alternatives for implementing long-term solutions to ecosystem degradation and water resources problems in the Saw Mill River Basin, New York. Restoration opportunities that meet Federal criteria will either be recommended for the Corps construction or, if additional analysis is required, will be recommended for further study. Restoration opportunities that do not meet Federal criteria may be recommended to other agencies or local stakeholders.

The non-Federal sponsor, Westchester County Department of Planning, will share the cost of the Feasibility Study with the Corps. Congressional and local support for this study has been strong and active in maintaining Federal involvement.

The Westchester County Department of Planning has identified two primary water resource needs to be addressed in the feasibility study: (1) a single comprehensive basin-wide analysis of ecosystem restoration opportunities to be used as an implementation plan for future restoration within the basin, and (2) ecosystem restoration at two sites identified as priority restoration sites (Former stump dump and wetland in the Village of Elmsford and Woodlands Lake).

The Comprehensive Saw Mill River Basinwide Watershed Management Plan (Comprehensive Basinwide Watershed Management Plan) will be a component of the feasibility study report that addresses the overall aquatic ecosystem needs and opportunities of the basin. During the reconnaissance analysis, the non-Federal partner, Federal and non-Federal agencies, citizen groups, and other stakeholders identified the need for a holistic basinwide assessment of aquatic ecosystem problems that includes chronic systematic ecosystem degradation problems within the estuary. They also identified potential ecosystem restoration opportunities without having formulated site preferences for these opportunities. The Comprehensive Basinwide Watershed Management Plan will address systematic degradation by providing the basinwide framework within which the interconnectedness and dynamics of natural systems can be incorporated into the identification of future restoration opportunities. This report will address habitat fragmentation by identifying combinations of restoration opportunities in the context of watershed and regional ecosystem enhancement. The Comprehensive Basinwide Watershed Management Plan will support the recommendation of additional site-specific restoration projects for feasibility level analysis and will provide a Project Management Plan and Project Cooperation Agreement for projects in the Federal interest.

The feasibility study report will identify, screen, and formulate alternative plans for two priority site-specific projects (see map) to restore degraded aquatic ecosystems in the river basin. All analyses and designs performed for the two priority sites will also be incorporated into the Comprehensive Basinwide Watershed Management Plan. Any projects identified at the two priority sites that meet Federal budgetary criteria will be recommended for construction. Opportunities to expedite the construction of restoration alternatives, including interim construction authorities, will be explored. Also, the comprehensive basin-wide analysis of ecosystem restoration opportunities may identify additional areas for future Corps-partnering in solutions to ecosystem degradation and water resources problems in the study area. Additional projects that are found to be in the Federal interest will be recommended for further analyses.

The Corps and the non-Federal partner recognize that local knowledge of restoration needs and problems provides invaluable aid when formulating solutions. Therefore, we request and welcome any pertinent information about the Saw Mill River Basin with regards to ecosystem restoration, including wetland creation and improvement of sediment quality and any other related areas of concern, from Federal, State, local agencies, and the public, including local interest groups and civic organizations. A wide and inclusive level of public involvement and participation throughout the entire study period is desired.

Interested parties should send all comments and information to:

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Enclosure